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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Andorra, Australia, Austria, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Philippines, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe: draft resolution

United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education and public information activities in the field of human rights

The General Assembly,

Guided by the fundamental and universal principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] according to article 26 of which "education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms", and the provisions of other international human rights instruments, such as those of article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights[2] and article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[3] that reflect the aims of the aforementioned article,

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[1] Resolution 217 A (III).

[2] Resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[3] Resolution 44/25, annex.

Recalling the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights concerning the World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights, the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004, the project of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization entitled "Towards a culture of peace", the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993,[4] and the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Believing that the World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights is a valuable complement to the activities of the United Nations aimed at the further promotion and protection of human rights, and recalling the importance attached by the World Conference on Human Rights to human rights education and information,

Convinced that human rights education and information contribute to the realization of the right to development, to equal participation of women and men in the development process, and to support for the special needs and interests of such groups as children, indigenous people, marginalized people, minorities and disabled persons,

Convinced also that human rights education should involve more than the provision of information and should constitute a comprehensive lifelong process by which people at all levels of development and in all strata of society learn respect for the dignity of others and the means and methods of ensuring that respect within a democratic society,

Recognizing that human rights education and information are essential to the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and that carefully designed programmes of teaching, learning, training and sharing of experiences, materials and information can have a catalytic effect on national, regional and international initiatives to promote and protect human rights and prevent human rights violations,

Welcoming the programmes and activities undertaken by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the framework of its transdisciplinary project entitled "Towards a culture of peace", as outlined in the report of the Director-General,[5]

Recognizing the invaluable and creative role that non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations can play in disseminating public information and engaging in human rights education, especially at the grass-roots level and in remote and rural communities,

Aware of the potential supportive role of the private sector in implementing at all levels of society the Plan of Action for the Decade and the

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[4] A/CONF.157/24 (part I), chap. III.

[5] A/51/395, annex.

World Public Information Campaign, through creative initiatives and financial support for governmental and non-governmental activities,

Convinced that the effectiveness of existing human rights education and public information activities would be enhanced by better coordination and cooperation at the national, regional and international levels,

Recalling that it is the responsibility of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to coordinate relevant United Nations education and public information programmes in the field of human rights,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the implementation of the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education,[6] and of the report of the Secretary-General on the development of public information activities in the field of human rights, including the World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights;[7]

2. Welcomes the steps taken by numerous Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to implement the Plan of Action for the Decade, as indicated in the report of the High Commissioner;

3. Urges all Governments to inform their communities about the World Public Information Campaign and the Decade for Human Rights Education and to contribute further to the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Decade, in accordance with national conditions, by establishing broadly representative national committees for human rights education and training centres for human rights education or, where such bodies exist, by strengthening them as agents for the elaboration and implementation of an action-oriented national plan for information and education in human rights, as well as by encouraging and supporting national and local non-governmental organizations and community-based groups, involving them in the implementation of the national action plan and including others in developing educational and cultural programmes, as recommended in the Plan of Action for the Decade;

4. Appeals to Governments, in accordance with national conditions, to accord priority to the dissemination in the relevant national and local languages of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights and other human rights instruments, human rights materials and training manuals in their communities, as well as reports of States Parties under the human rights treaties, and to provide information and education in those languages on the practical ways in which national and international institutions and procedures may be utilized to ensure the effective implementation of those instruments;

5. Welcomes the efforts made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, together with the Department of Public Information of the United

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[6] A/51/506, annex.

[7] A/51/558.

Nations Secretariat, to increase cooperation with the media, including by the provision of timely and relevant information on human rights issues, and urges him to complete discussions on the creation of the media advisory board, as suggested in the Plan of Action;

6. Requests the High Commissioner to continue to coordinate the implementation of the Plan of Action, to ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency in the use, processing, management and distribution of information and educational materials, and to continue to coordinate and harmonize human rights information strategies within the United Nations system;

7. Requests the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat to continue the development of training courses and materials, including targeted training manuals for professional audiences, as well as the dissemination of human rights information materials as a component of technical assistance projects, supplemented by electronic means wherever possible, taking particular account of the human rights needs of women, children, remote or isolated communities and persons with low levels of literacy;

8. Requests the existing human rights monitoring bodies to place emphasis on the implementation by Member States of their international obligation to promote and implement programmes of information and education in human rights;

9. Requests the Secretary-General to consider establishing a voluntary fund for human rights education, with special provision for the support of the human rights education activities of non-governmental organizations, to be administered by the Centre for Human Rights;

10. Invites the specialized agencies and relevant United Nations programmes to contribute, within their respective spheres of competence, to the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Decade and the World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights;

11. Calls upon international, regional and national non-governmental organizations, in particular those concerned with women, labour, development, food, housing, education, health care and the environment, as well as all other social justice groups, human rights advocates, educators, religious organizations and the media, to undertake specific activities of formal, non-formal and informal education, including cultural events, alone and in cooperation with the Centre for Human Rights, in implementing the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education;

12. Urges the Department of Public Information to continue to utilize United Nations information centres for the timely dissemination, within their designated areas of activity, of basic information, reference and audiovisual materials on human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the reports of States Parties under human rights instruments, and, to this end, to ensure that United Nations information centres are supplied with adequate quantities of those materials;

13. Stresses the need for close collaboration between the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Centre for Human Rights

and the Department of Public Information in the implementation of the World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights and the Decade for Human Rights Education, and the need to harmonize their activities with those of other organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and relevant non-governmental organizations, with regard to the dissemination of information on international humanitarian law;

14. Requests the High Commissioner, in cooperation with the Centre for Human Rights, the Department of Public Information, the treaty-monitoring bodies, relevant United Nations organs and agencies, non-governmental organizations and national institutions, in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 1996/42 of 19 April 1996,[8] to elaborate a strategy of two years of intensive educational and cultural activities throughout the world for the preparation of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 1998;

15. Requests the Secretary-General to disseminate the content of the present resolution widely to Governments and non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations concerned with human rights education and public information, and to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session a comprehensive report on the implementation of the present resolution for consideration under the item entitled "Human rights questions".

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[8] See E/1996/L.18; for the final text, see Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1996, Supplement No. 3 (E/1996/23).